



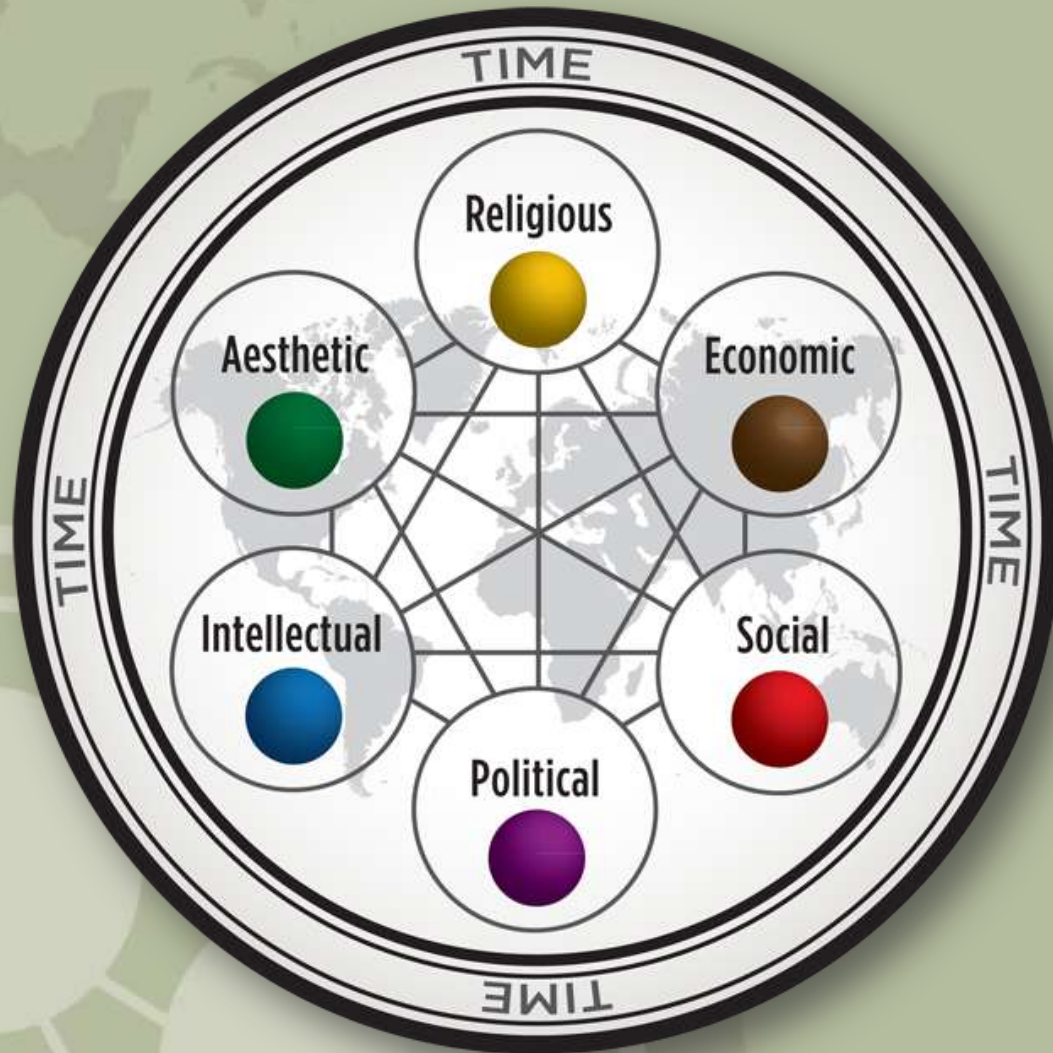
History

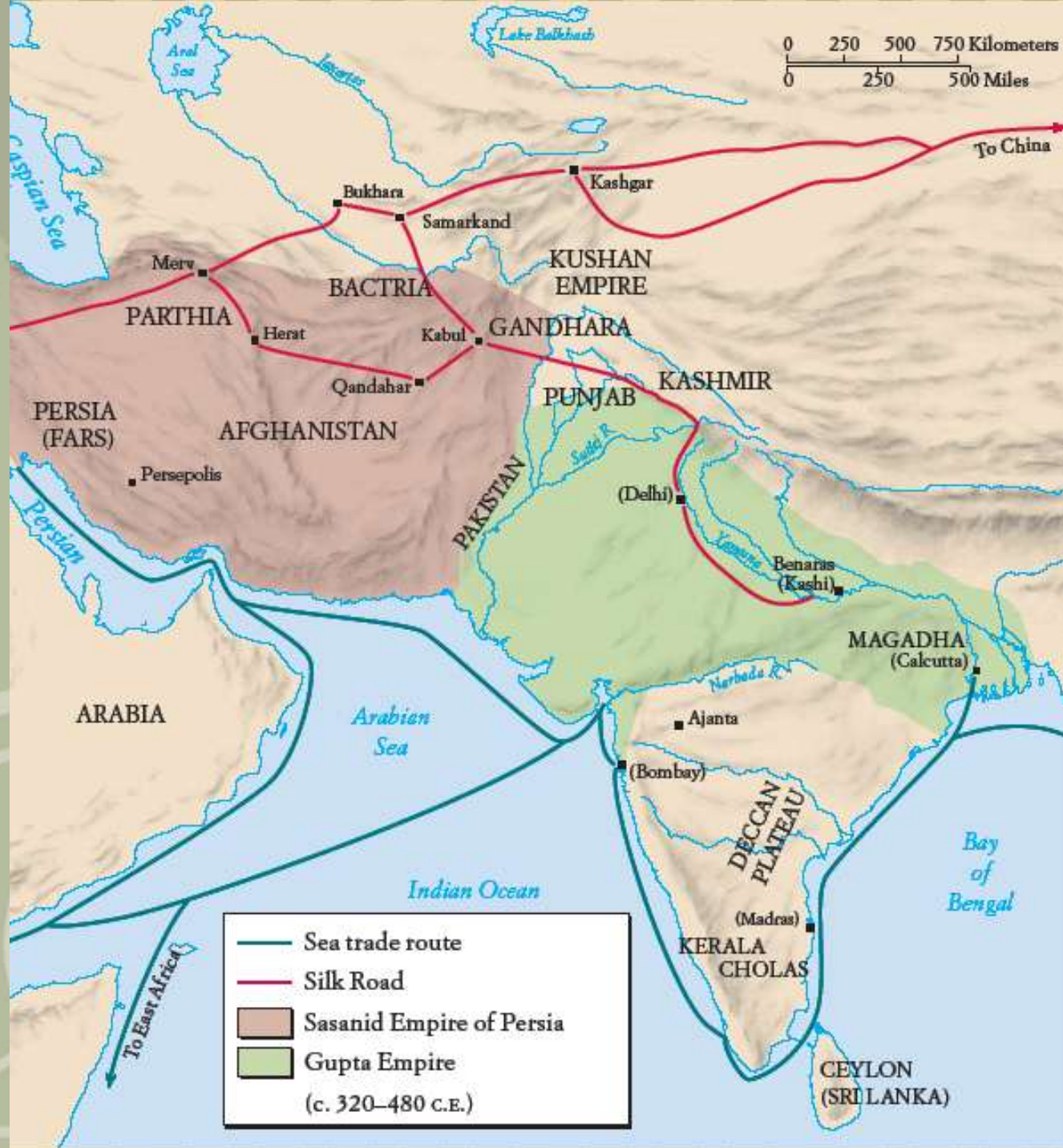
a cultural approach

Indian Civilization in its Golden Age

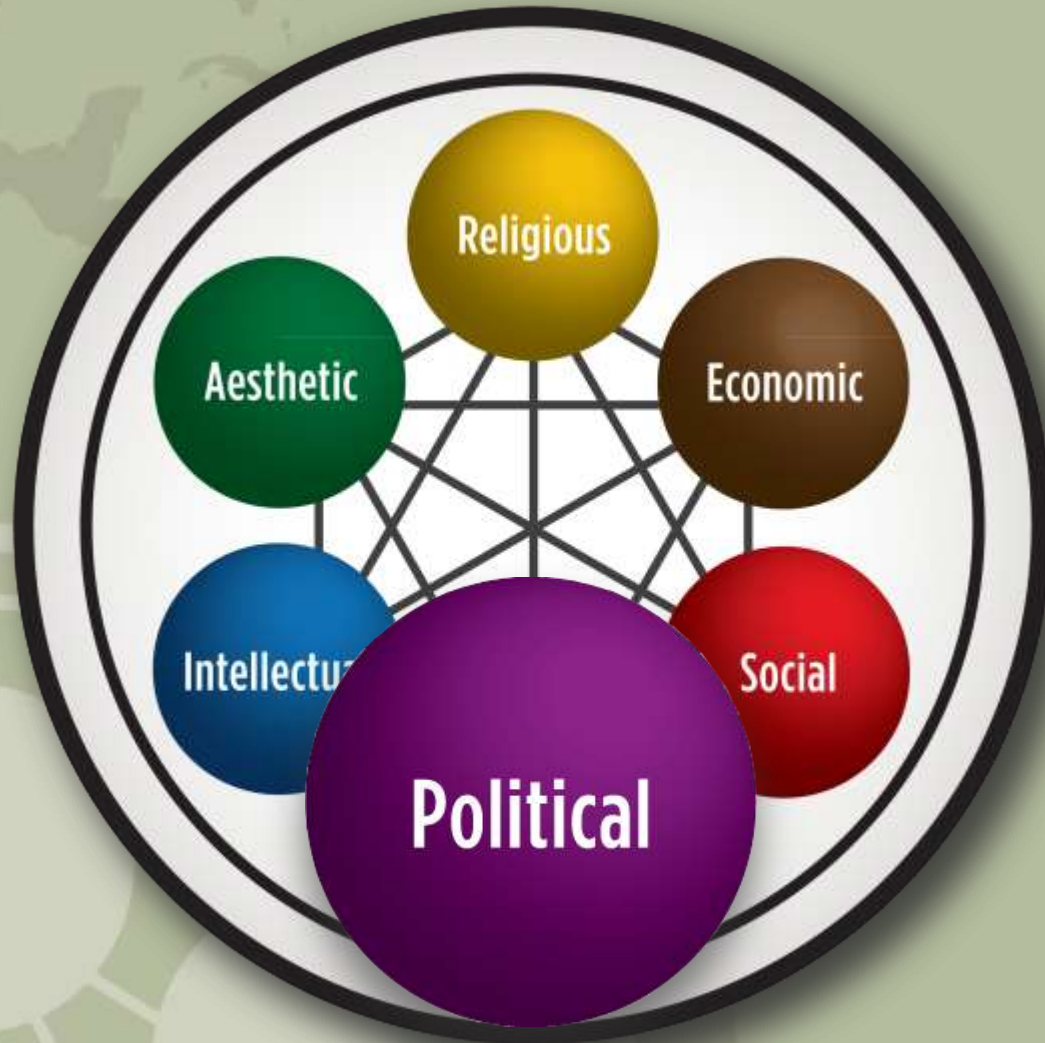
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Time and Geography





POLITICAL



The Gupta Dynasty

- India reverted to a group of small principalities fighting one another
- Gupta kings created empire including most of India
- Was last Indian-led unification of the country until 20th century
- We know relatively little about Gupta India – main materials are religious poetry, folklore

ECONOMIC



Economic and Cultural Progress

- Agrarian villages were center of life, changed little in appearance
- Most villagers were landowners or tenants
- Rice was chief crop



A rice crop

INTELLECTUAL/ AESTHETIC



Economic and Cultural Progress

- Control, distribution of water were source of controversy, even wars
- Upsurge of Sanskrit literature – Kalidasa was great playwright
- Notable achievements in sciences: mathematics and astronomy
- Medical sciences developed significantly

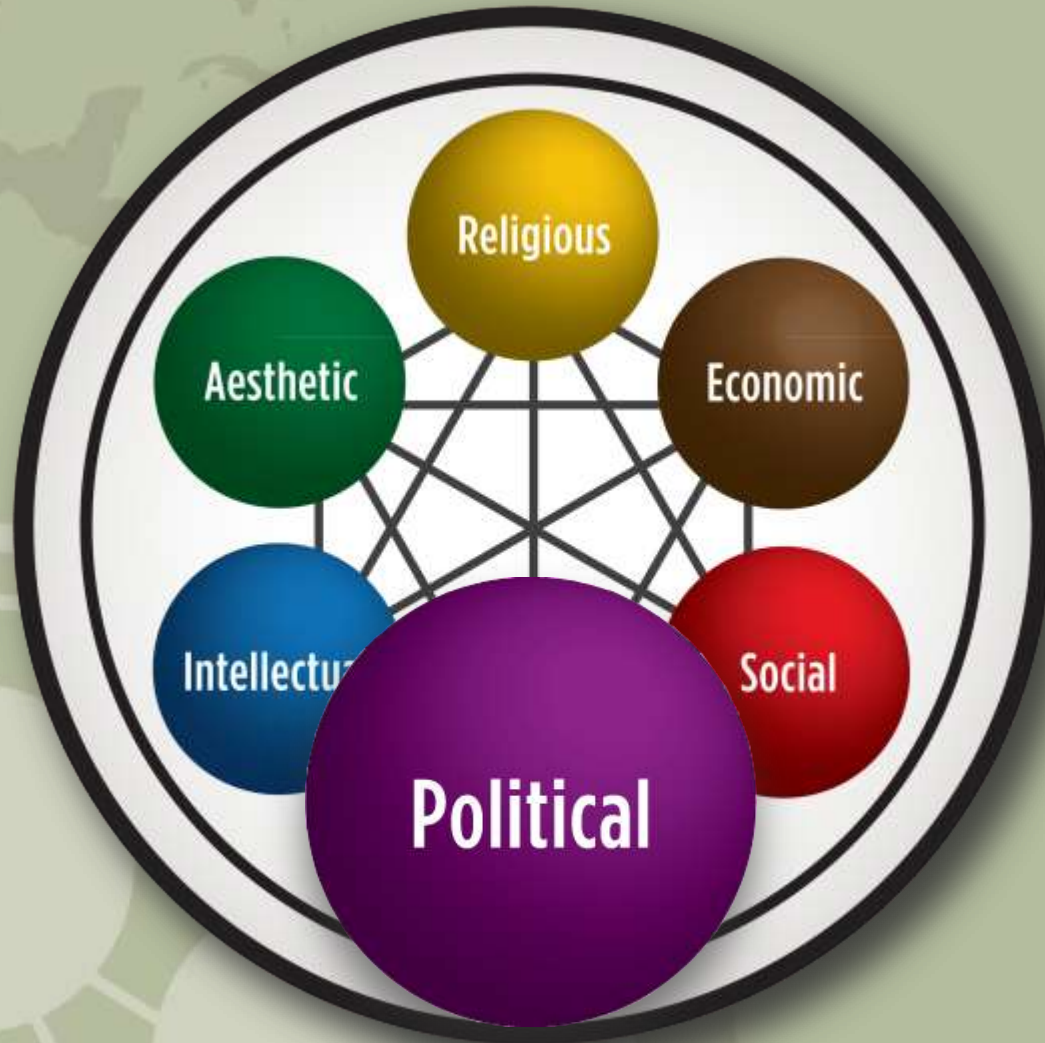


Kalidasa

Intellectual

Aesthetic

POLITICAL



Political Fragmentation

South: Hinduism and Buddhism

- Political history of south is almost unknown
- Culture strongly influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism
- Great flourishing of Buddhist and Hindu architecture, sculpture
- Ajanta caves – paintings inspired by legends, religious stories



Ajanta
caves



Political Fragmentation

North: Islam Comes to India

- Muslim forces came out of Afghanistan
- Powerful raids between 1001-1030 to seize booty
- 1192, Delhi sultanate set up
- Patterns of Muslim-Hindu relations were set – little tolerance
- Muslims involved in trade (cotton, silk, steel swords), took back Indian knowledge of Algebra and Astronomy
- Muslim conquest ended long decline of Buddhism in India

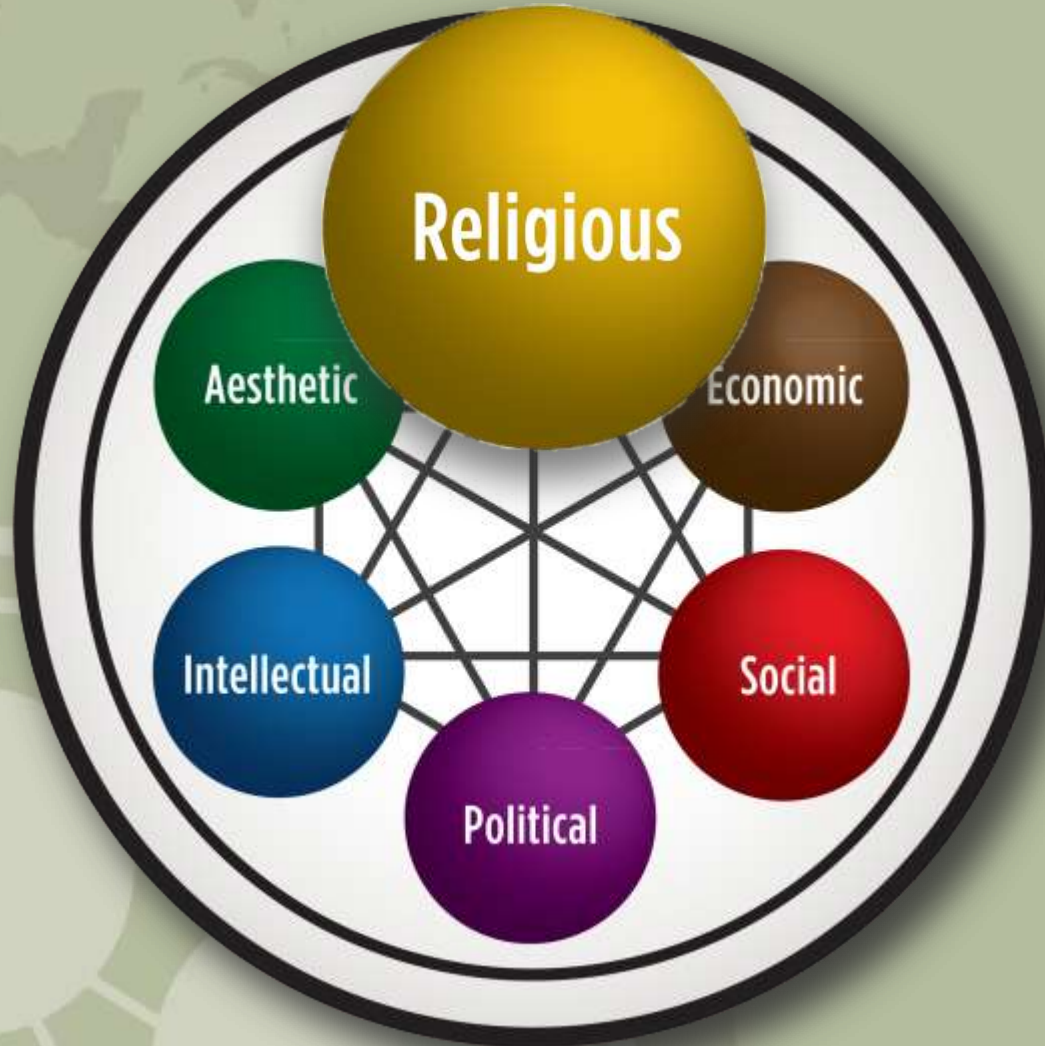
AESTHETIC



Hindu Doctrines in the Classical Age

- Vedas
 - Four lengthy epic poems
 - Deal with relations between gods and humans
 - Most significant was Rigveda
 - Vedic religion was one of ritual, sacrifice
- Upanishads - long and short philosophical speculations, poems

RELIGIOUS



Hindu Doctrines in the Classical Age

- Hindu deities
 - Brahman, world spirit, source of all life
 - Vishnu, preserver, instructor/protector of all humans
 - Shiva, destroyer and creator, lord of life and death
- Hinduism developed less formal, more speculative approach to religion

Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva



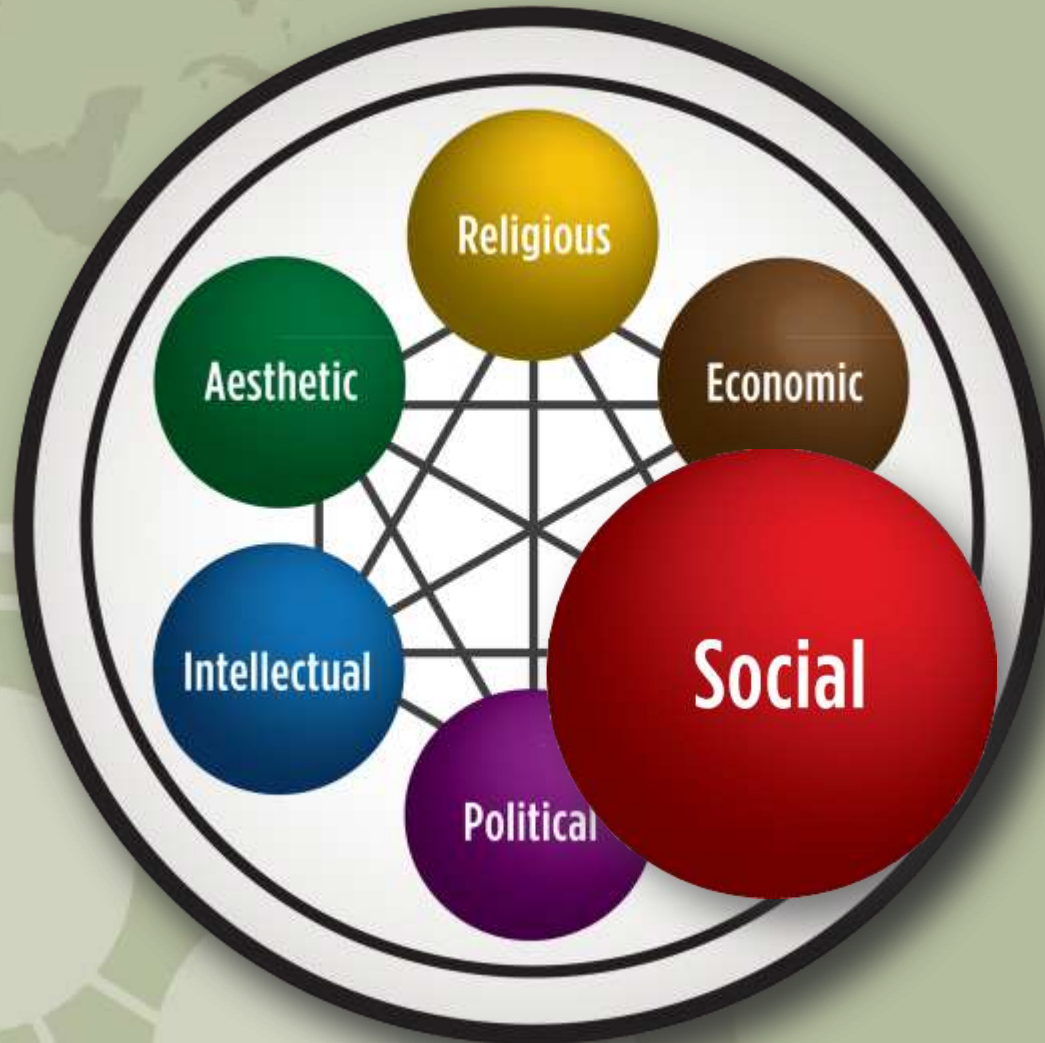
Hindu Doctrines in the Classical Age

- Mahabharata (Great Story)
 - World's longest poem
 - Most popular part was Bhagavad-Gita
- Buddhism and Hinduism had many subdivisions, within the religion

A scene from the Mahabharata



SOCIAL



Development of Caste System

- Sub-castes multiplied
- Caste members linked by occupation, territory, doctrines
- Could raise or lower status through marriage
- Stratification of society grew stronger
- Caste system was cement holding nation together
- Created permanent barriers among individuals

Social Customs

- Extended family
 - Lived under same roof
 - Male authority
 - Polygamy and concubinage
- Females clearly subservient to males; husbands decided everything
- Marriages arranged early in life
 - Primarily economic and social affair
 - Always married within caste
 - Purpose of wife was to bear children, preferably sons
 - Divorce was rare

Women and Sexuality



A veiled woman

- Early freedom of women declined
 - Veiling, strict isolation
 - Widows to remain in mourning, never remarry
 - Some women chose suicide to follow dead husband (sati)

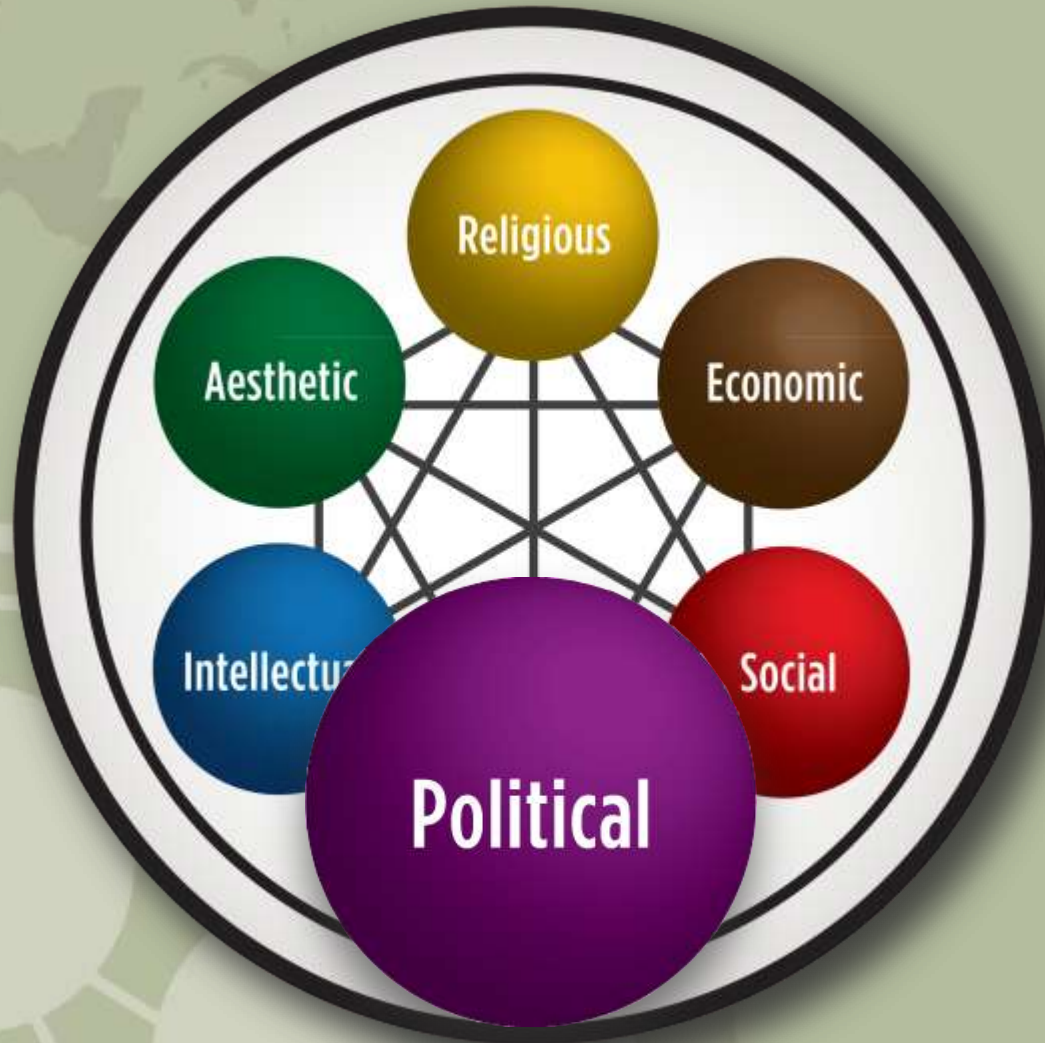
Women and Sexuality

- Sexuality
 - Hinduism accepts all forms of pleasure, especially sex
 - Prostitutes were common
 - Male attitudes were dual: women were both good and evil at the same time



Indian women

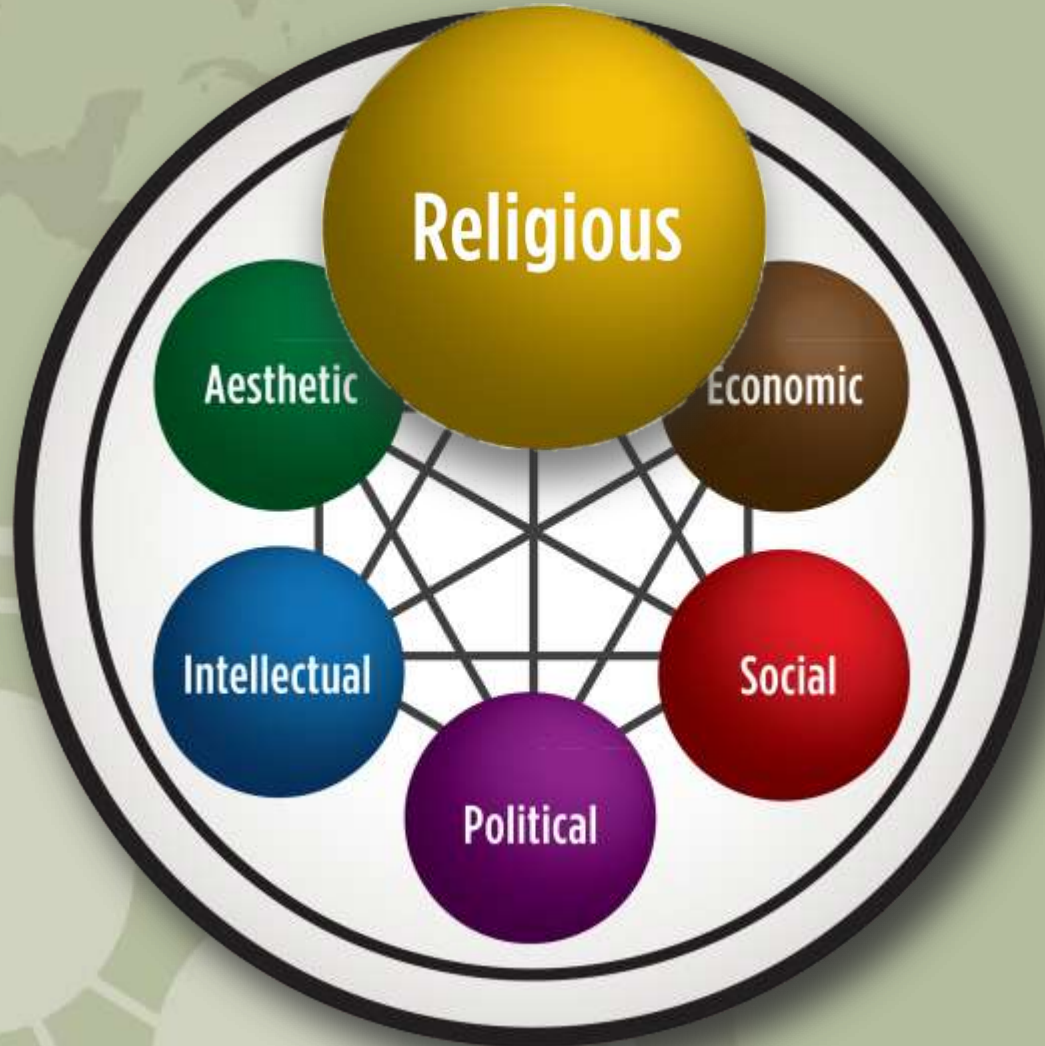
POLITICAL



India and East Asia

- Colonies established in southeast Asia
 - By invitation rather than conquest
 - Indian element functioned as teachers, administrators
 - Indians remained small minority
- Southeast Asians were selective in adopting Indian culture
 - Rejected caste system
 - Accepted linguistic, commercial, artistic aspects
 - Some Hindu religious, philosophical beliefs were adopted
 - Buddhism succeeded Hinduism: Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam
 - After 7th C, Islam supplanted Buddhism in most of India and Southeast Asia

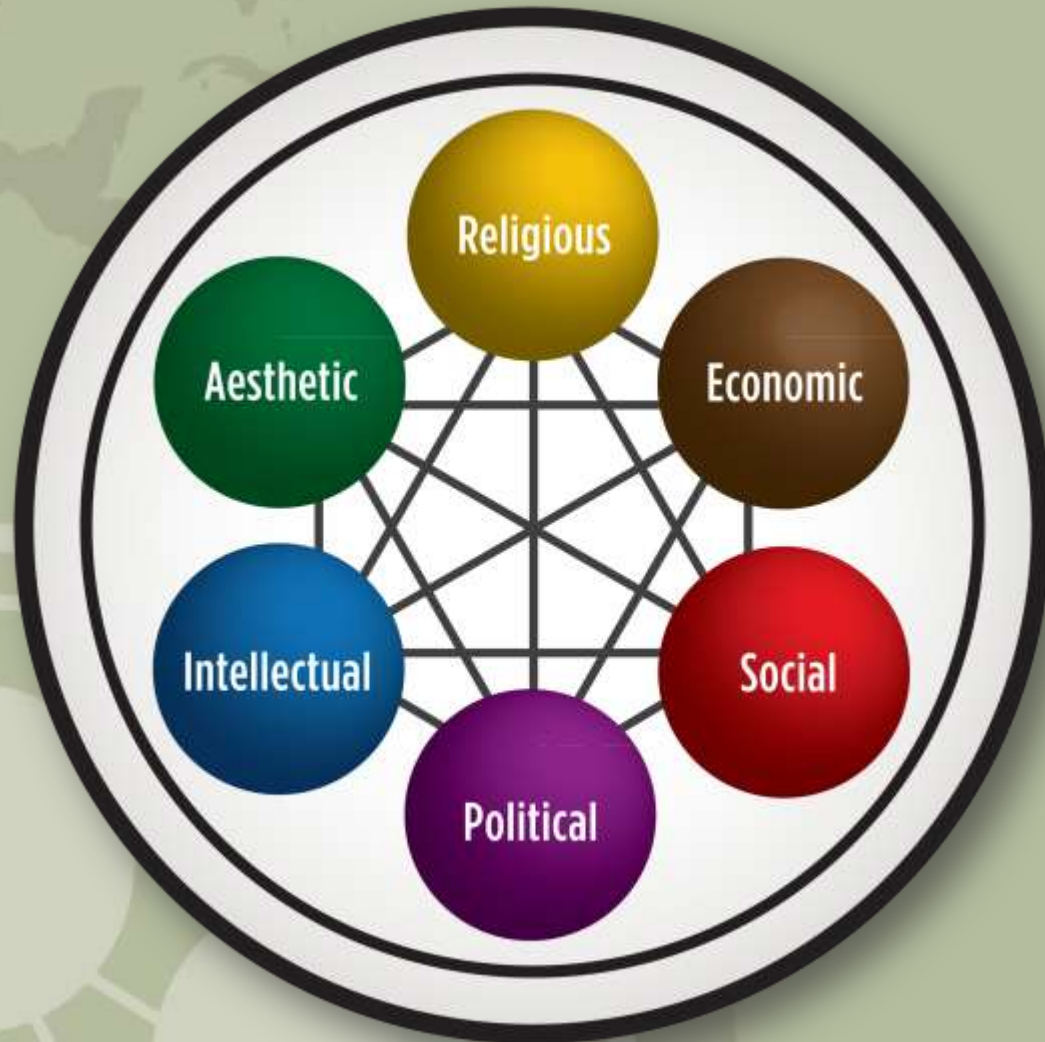
RELIGIOUS



Buddhism in East Asia

- Buddhist monks emigrated, established monasteries
- Buddhism completely supplanted Hinduism
- Lively luxury trade: spices, silk
- Angkor Wat in Khmer kingdom of Cambodia, was largest religious building in the world
- Empire of Sri Vijaya
 - Expanded Hinduism throughout Indonesia
 - Upper class became Hindu
 - Hinduism changed, absorbed new ideas

REVIEW



Discussion Questions

1. The religious situation in southern India at this point in time was one of tolerance between Buddhism and Hinduism, while in the north, Islam took over. Why do you think the Buddhists and Hindus could co-exist peacefully, while Hindu-Muslim relations were exceedingly intolerant?
2. Hinduism like many religions of the time, preached a doctrine of female inferiority. Why do you think this ideology was so pervasive throughout the ancient world? How did Hindu philosophy and practice compare to Muslim attitudes about women? Christian attitudes?



History

a cultural approach



COLUMBUS STATE

UNIVERSITY